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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 5056
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 7854
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RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 9955
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [ASEC](#) [TH](#)
SUBJECT: THAI CABINET BLOCKS MARTIAL LAW PROPOSAL

REF: A) BANGKOK 05407 B) BANGKOK 05036

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission James F. Entwistle, reasons 1.4
(b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. The Thai Cabinet October 22 rejected a recommendation by the Thai National Security Council (NSC) that would have left martial law in place in many areas of the country. In response, the NSC is reportedly preparing a revised proposal that is expected to lift martial law in many areas while maintaining it in key border districts. We will continue to press the RTG to lift martial law as widely as possible. End Summary.

THAI NSC REVISING MARTIAL LAW PROPOSAL

¶2. (C) The Thai Cabinet October 22 declined to approve the Thai National Security Council's (NSC) recommendation to lift martial law in eleven provinces and impose it anew in three provinces. We understand the Cabinet and Prime Minister Surayud Chulanont thought the proposal would have left martial law in effect too broadly. Under the NSC's October 12 proposal, martial law would remain in all or part of twenty-seven of Thailand's seventy-six provinces. The Cabinet's decision is surprising, as Ministry of Foreign Affairs Permanent Secretary Virasakdi Futrakul had previously indicated that the Thai cabinet would approve the proposal for martial law (Ref A.)

¶3. (C) An official at the NSC told us that PM Surayud had this week ordered the NSC to analyze the national security need for martial law on a district (amphoe) by district basis. Surayud had instructed a careful study by the NSC because, as martial law requires the King's endorsement as a royal decree, Surayud wants this to be the last such decree before the election.

¶4. (C) According to a NSC document, the October 12 proposal would have imposed martial law in twenty-seven provinces. In fourteen provinces, primarily in the northeast, martial law would have been in effect over the entire province. The proposal would have imposed martial law on various districts in the remaining thirteen provinces.

POSSIBLY ONLY BORDER DISTRICTS IN THE NORTH AND NORTHEAST

15. (C) We learned from the NSC that the present review will likely produce a proposal to limit martial law to border districts in the north and northeast rather than on entire provinces as proposed October 12. Southern provinces affected by insurgency would remain under martial law. While the number of provinces proposed for martial law would likely remain relatively unchanged, the new proposal could result in a significant reduction in the number of districts under martial law when compared with the NSC's previous proposal. The NSC told us that PM Surayud instructed the NSC to prepare a revised proposal for consideration at the next Cabinet meeting on October 30.

16. (U) The Cabinet decision comes as the October 12 martial law proposal has come under attack in the press and by politicians. Even Democrat Party leader Abhisit Vejjajiva, who initially said martial law would not negatively influence elections, now is calling for martial law to be lifted as widely as possible.

COMMENT

17. (C) In an apparent recognition of the criticism that arose after the October 12 proposal, the NSC appears to be holding information regarding the next martial law proposal much more closely this time around. As the next decree on martial law will likely remain in effect through the election campaign, we will follow this process closely and will continue to press the Thai government to lift martial law as widely as possible.
BOYCE